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AFGHANISTAN

MISSION BY SOVIET AIRMEN DESCRIBED

PM101621 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 9 Jul 85 second edition p 2

[Correspondent Lieutenant Colonel V. Skrizhalin dispatch under the rubric "On Afghanistan's Soil": "Helicopter Men's Feat"--first two grafs are editorial introduction]

[Text] Limited contingent of Soviet forces in Afghanistan--"Comrade commander, there's a fire in the hold, there are casualties." This studiously calm report was the start of a feat by soviet pilots in the Afghan sky.

But, to be absolutely exact, the feat of the Mi-6 helicopter crew began long before the dushman attacked the helicopter from the mountain antiaircraft gun placement. So the story of the Soviet pilots' nobility, self-possession, courage, and skill does not rightly begin from that moment...

Badakhshan. In this Afghan province everything comes "in superlatives"; it is the most mountainous, the most inaccessible, the most sparsely populated, the richest in natural resources, and the most patriarchal economically... These "superlatives" derive largely from its remoteness and from the absence of any kind of decent roads.

In order to facilitate the implementation of socioeconomic transformations in Badakhshan for the DRA people's government, a squadron of Mi-6 helicopters from the Soviet limited military contingent has been allocated to help it. This air subunit transports only Afghan freight and works exclusively in the interests of the national economy.

When it is flying weather there is the incessant roar of helicopter engines above the tiny airfield. It is Lieutenant Colonel G. Salnikov, commander of the squadron, and his subordinates who deliver freight to the provincial center and then to Badakhshan's districts. Grain, cement, fertilizer, fuel, clothing, and books are flown into Badakhshan. Badakhshan inhabitants--insofar as personal opportunities permit--dispatch with the same helicopters to other regions of the country livestock products, fruits, and all kinds of nuts...

Where don't our "Mi-6's" fly there! Everybody in the province knows them by their numbers. The Afghans also know the commander's surname: During

a year of flights around the "God-forsaken corners" of Badakhshan, "rafik salnikov" (rafik equals comrade) he gained a well-deserved popularity among the people. He is seen most frequently in Baharak. The helicopter pad there ranks among the particularly difficult landings, with a very complex approach, but the squadron commander, as always, takes on the most dangerous task himself.

This time too it was another flight to Baharak. On board there were 16 Afghan passengers and 7 metric tons of freight--fertilizer. After takeoff they followed the set course. The idea of a possible calamity did not even enter anybody's head: the way was short, the route familiar, the machine reliable, and the commander very experienced--the helicopter was flown by Salnikov himself.

...None of those on board the helicopter, naturally, could hear the shots above the roar of the engines. But everybody felt the attack on the hold which shook the multiton helicopter.

The shots came from carefully camouflaged firing positions. Camouflaged so skillfully--and we must give their due to the foreign instructors and advisers --that the two escort helicopters flying close by located the placement only after the shots, by the tracer.

Those who fired knew full well what freight these helicopters were flying over Badakhshan. The dushmans knew something else as well; that it was rare for the helicopter to fly without passengers. They also knew who was flying; not Soviet nor Afghan soliders, but peaceful Afghan citizens.

They knew and they still attacked. They could have been simply bandits with the philosophy of criminals: shoot at all costs--a downed helicopter is handsomely rewarded. But the shots could have been fired by those who call themselves "freedom fighters" but who in practice hate freedom, hate the people's power and the people in whose interests this power is leading the country along a new path...

This is when the report reached the commander about the shooting and the casualties--report with which we began the story of the interrupted flight which has entered the annals of courage, patriotism, and internationalism which Soviet servicemen are writing on Afghan soil. Flight mechanic Ensign E. Bordyus was reporting.

Lt Col Salnikov, from whom the sense of responsibility as crew and squadron commander had never departed, now felt even more acutely that the course of further events would depend on his behavior, his orders, and even their tone.

"We will land!" he decided.

This was not the best decision for the crew's safety. A helicopter burns for a certain period of time. Most frequently a short period. Then it explodes. If the machine cannot be prevented from falling, an explosion occurs on hitting the ground. Or perhaps earlier--in the air... But no

other decision was possible: None of the airmen thought of themselves. Behind them sat 16 people, half of them women. If there had been no passengers, the crew could have left the burning helicopter by parachute. The presence on board of people with no possibility of escape forced him to take the decision to land.

The passengers were lucky with the crew--the most experienced in the squadron. Especially with the chief participants in the landing--the commander who had spent almost 3,000 hours in the air, and flight technician Captain Yu. Medvedev, a master of combat skills.

...Meanwhile the stifling smoke filled the pilot's cabin too. So what about the hold? The passengers worried Salnikov most of all. He did not know how civilians would behave in such a situation. The main thing was to prevent panic. As if in confirmation of the commander's anxious thoughts, three Afghans losing their composure burst into the cockpit to escape from the fire.

"Order must be ensured in the hold": this order of the commander was addressed to Ensign Bordyus.

And then yet another round hit the helicopter. Now it was from a large-caliber machinegun. Armor-piercing incendiary bullets penetrated the pilot's cabin between the commander and the flight radio operator, Ensign Yu. Kozlov. The floor caught fire. Now in the smoke Salnikov could not even make out the instrument panel. He thrust his head through the window. This was the only way he could choose a suitable landing site...

The escort helicopters circled above to cover the landing of the heavy machine now losing height.

In such a situation you must be ready for anything. Some of those who had entered the cockpit seeking to escape fell on Salnikov. Somebody's hands--it was impossible to see in the smoke--convulsively seized the pilots' shoulder. Somebody hung onto his right arm which was steering the helicopter. Losing control of their senses, people rushed to the window to jump out. The steering hand which had been seized continued with difficulty to turn and the helicopter, which was obeying the pilot with increasing difficulty, began to rock...

"Pull them off!..."

It took Medvedev and Bordyus considerable efforts to establish relative order on board.

The cockpit was burning. The blinded airmen were now operating by touch. The skin seemed to be starting to split from the heat.

The helicopter plunged steeply down. It almost crashed. During that struggle, short in time but mercilessly consuming the whole reserve of physical and nervous forces, it all hung on Salnikov, his skill, and his authority. If he had given in to any weakness, the crew would have sensed this and it is difficult to say how it would all have ended.

Flight technician Capt Yu. Medvedev did everything to ensure that the burning machine's engines kept working. His flying experience and composure also played a considerable role in saving the people. Without letting the machine crash, the pilots headed for the ground. The burning, almost uncontrollable helicopter did not crash, but landed before exploding.

When the helicopter landed, Lt Col Salnikov could have immediately jumped to the ground. But his commander's duty and male chivalry--there were women in the cabin--forced him to free the access to the open window and, falling back into the interior of the burning cockpit, to help evacuate the Afghans from the helicopter which was on the point of exploding. Lt Col G. Salnikov and Capt Yu. Medvedev left the helicopter last.

"Everybody away from the helicopter!"

Moving away from the burning helicopter, the people fled toward the mountain, hoping to take refuge there from the explosion. But the mountain met them with bullets. The dushmans were firing. At everybody in turn.

The Afghan men and women, whom the Soviet Airmen had saved in the air, now sought protection from them on the ground. A young Afghan pressed himself to the ground next to Lt Col Salnikov as he set about defensive measures. The others lay down close to the other airmen. Only an Afghan girl, having survived the fiery hell in the air, covered 100 paces on the ground before she was hit by a dushman bullet...

Rescue soon came, by air. And by land. But the joy of the rescue could not dispel the bitter grief of the survivors for those whose lives had just been cut short. Navigator Senior Lieutenant V. Vilchevskiy and the youngest crew member, co-pilot V. Belyakov, will never again rise into the sky. They died saving and defending peaceful Afghans in battle, where their main weapons were courage, nobility, and skill.

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AFGHANISTAN

MOSCOW TV REPORTS BOMB BLAST IN MAZAR-E SHARIF

0W102359 Moscow Television Service in Russian 1400 GMT 9 Jul 85

[From the Novosti newscast; Mikhail Leshchinskiy video report, including interview with (Abdul Jamir Zarifiah), governor of Balkh Province, Afghanistan]

[Text] Our correspondent in Afghanistan Mikhail Leshchinskiy reports:

[Begin video report] [Leshchinskiy] [Video shows damaged building, rubble] This house in the very center of one of the oldest and most beautiful cities in Central Asia, Mazar-e Sharif, was blown up by bandits. As a result, dozens of peaceful residents--old men, women, and children--were killed or injured. However, not only this stunned the townspeople. The explosion occurred very close to a famous mosque.

Using religious slogans as a cover, the hired killers are waging a struggle against their own people and the religion they respect. To persevere, and win, in this undeclared war foisted on Afghanistan is the most important task in the present stage of the national democratic revolution. The social base of the new regime is expanding steadily. More than half the growth in the number of party members is accounted for by craftsmen, petty traders, intellectuals, and religious figures. The role of precisely these levels of the population is also growing in local organs of self-government.

I would like to present (Abdul Jamir Zarifiah). He is a well-known religious figure in Afghanistan. Yet, at the same time, he is also a member of the PDPA and, quite recently, was appointed governor of Balkh Province, one of the country's largest provinces in the north.

[(Zarifiah), speaking in vernacular with Leshchinskiy providing Russian translation] At the present stage of the April Revolution, the party is doing everything to ensure the welfare of the Muslim working people, and for the progress of the people. The people's power respects religious sentiments, and the fact that I am the governor confirms this.

It is our task now to describe all this to the people who support the revolution and must do everything for its victory. [end video report]

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AFGHANISTAN

KIRGHIZ RAYON NEWSPAPER DEPUTY EDITOR ON COMBAT DEATH

Frunze LENINCHIL JASH in Kirghiz 4 Sep 84 p 3

[Article by N. Kochkorov, the assistant chief editor of the Bazar-Korgonskiy Rayon newspaper EMGEK JALYNY, under the rubric "The Soviet Character":
"They Said He Would Become a Teacher..."]

[Text] ... Life. What is more valuable than a person's life? Among the Kirghiz people, the elderly, when pleased by the young, give the blessing, "My child, may your life be long." So that a new-born child may live a happy life, his mother will keep a vigil till dawn, forsaking sleep, not closing her eyes, and singing lullabies. The mother will also gaze at her son, who sometimes dozes and then jostles and suckles the breast at his mouth, totally untroubled about anything, and will make the wish, "May you be healthy and live long." In the life of the people there is no greater happiness than for life to be long. Private Aripjan's mother Shirinkhan-ene also wished a thousand times for her son to be happy. His father would long look forward when returning home from work to getting little Aripjan to run to meet him and to enjoying the embrace of father and child. And then his father Torojan and his mother Shirinkhan would look and laugh at the effort of their son who, unable to walk, would fall while trying to follow in his father's footsteps....

How quickly the days pass! The Aripjan who only yesterday was learning to walk was not studying in the 10th grade. One day the class adviser, physics teacher Karim Ergeshov, summoned him, and they talked for a long time. The young teacher had been constantly concerned about the future of the foremost student in the class he had been the adviser of for four years. Aripjan had excelled in his lessons as compared to the other pupils. While the history teacher thought he would be a good historian, the physical education teacher thought Aripjan would turn out to be an excellent athlete. And yet in his own mind the class adviser really wanted Aripjan to be a physicist. This was because, following the practical assistance he had shown his teacher in decorating the physics classroom, K. Ergeshov had been pleased that Aripjan liked physics so much and had mastered it the best. At the question, "Aripjan, so what do you want to be in the future?", he smiled and said confidently, "To tell the truth, my first goal is to serve the Homeland in the ranks of the Soviet Army. I would like very much to be a soldier. And afterwards I will enroll in a physical education institute, and I would like to test my abilities at being a sports instructor

in the village and at farming." You can believe everything he said. While he would say he wanted to follow his father's profession and be a peasant and machine operator, the fiery sentiment of youth would have also drawn him into sports.

Thus when Aripjan successfully completed No 10 School imeni Frunze in 1980, he worked on the family farm until April 1981. Each day he would go out into the fields and would admire the expansive fields of crops. The event on 4 April 1981 was one of the unforgettable days of his life. That day he became an adult when he was called into the ranks of the Soviet Army. When Aripjan wrapped his arm around the neck of his beloved grandmother Inoyatkhan and said, "Grandma, I am going off to be like the heroes in the jomoks [folktales] you used to tell, and yet you're about to cry again and not be proud about it." He consoled the heart of his 78-year-old grandmother, and truly at that time he compared himself to the young hero in a jomok that she used to tell. That day in Seydikum Valley, which has become a homeland for farming, his 10 brothers and sisters, his father and mother, his grandmother, his classmates, and his fellow-villagers waved good-bye to Aripjan and saw him off to the boundaries of the Homeland. At first he served in the scorching sandy deserts of Turkmenistan and put his youthful energy through some harsh tests. In those days his unit received a special instruction, and it set out to carry out the internationalist duty....

It was near the end of October 1981. Aripjan had washed in icy water before the soldiers got up and was walking to and fro likening this place to his own land.... Before you know it, the morning gymnastics had begun and are in full swing. That day the unit Aripjan was serving in had been given a special assignment. They had been engaged to undertake work in improving the surroundings of a village on the edge of a forest. Just past noontime, when the work was coming to an end, enemy fire was suddenly and unexpectedly heard from all directions. The soldiers who had been working untroubled hastily took cover and started to fall back. But Aripjan made a heroic response to their senseless attack and forced many of the enemy to retreat. But the enemy's number was large. To the words of the sergeant, "Aripjan, get back! It's impossible for us not to retreat," he whispered in response, "Just a minute, just a minute, let me give them their due just a little more; there can be no pity for the scoundrels, comrade sergeant." While the sergeant's words "Fall back, Tolonov" were resounding in his ears, the blood-thirsty enemy of the new order, who crops up before your eyes and then flees, stood up. Suddenly his left shoulder seemed to heat up. Seeing that warm blood was trickling down his army shirt, Aripjan consoled himself by thinking that it was nothing. Not long thereafter his eyes began to grow dark, and he could not drag his right foot. But he was not deterred from his goal. Despite how terrible he felt, for an instant the land where he was born, his white-haired grandmother, the pensive face of his father weary from work, his mother, and his precious brothers and sisters appeared before his eyes. The warm feeling that swept through his heart gave him strength and became his hope. With all the effort he had, he stood up, but fell down again. Just as the blue sky lets you know how good man's life is, the gun that was just clattering had no sound,

and the space all around was becoming totally peaceful and quiet. Aripjan, as he was losing consciousness, urged on his comrade, saying, "The enemy cannot win, my friend, run, run,"....

That day in the village of Seydikum Aripjan's family was untroubled by anything, living in the embrace of a happy life. While a sky full of stars captivates, an icy wind stirred by an autumn moon bites at the face. On television a concert program by soldiers was being broadcast. Little Aybek pointed out to his mother a soldier who was singing and said, "Look, he's like my big brother Aripjan. Remember, he sang to us like that too," and his simple child's world was plunged into wonderment....

"Private Aripjan Tolonov perished heroically while showing courage in the performance of internationalist service. His bright image and unique courage will never be forgotten. His name will be retained forever in the company's memorial book." The stern voice of the commander who spoke these words distressed those in Aripjan's unit very much. The entire regiment saw the young soldier, who perished courageously, off on his final journey....

Life. How valuable it is! His age--19 years. At such a time a person looks at life with boundless desire and ardently wants to achieve many things. Aripjan had such a great desire for life, and he strove toward many noble goals. He was a teen-ager who loved his Homeland immeasurably and who was profoundly devoted to the ideals of communism and educated in the spirit of Soviet patriotism. His friends, fellow-villagers, and teachers loved him boundlessly and used to say, "Aripjan is a bright young man, he'll be a fortunate person who earns the gratitude of the people."

A hero is not born a hero. Courage is not created out of nothing. All of it is the result of the character of the present-day Soviet man, the result of the Soviet life. Private Aripjan Tolonov too is someone who has boundless love for the people and the land, his brothers and sisters, and his parents. Not only that, but when he was in school, he was in friendly communication with pioneers from the fraternal socialist republics, and he received many letters. He was pleased about their happy life and wrote to them about himself. Such is the Soviet character. There is nothing more valuable for a Soviet soldier than for mankind to live in equality and freedom with peace on earth.

On 6 April 1982 a Decree conferring the Red Star Order upon Private Aripjan Tolonov was ceremoniously read before the unit he served in. Shortly thereafter a ceremony like that took place at No 10 High School imeni Frunze where he received his education. The Bazar-Korgonskiy Rayon Komsomol committee secretary D. Nyshanbayeva announced at a ceremonial meeting of the pioneers the resolution bestowing the name of the young hero on the squad [druzhina] at the school where he studied.

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PRAVDA ON DEVELOPMENT OF ROAD TRANSPORT

PM121124 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 10 Jul 85 First Edition p 5

[Own correspondent V. Baykov dispatch: "DRA Main Transport Routes"]

[Text] Kabul, 9 Jul--Afghanistan is a country without access to the sea. Nor does it have any railroads as yet. That is why road transportation is the main type of communications linking individual regions of the country with the outside world. The DRA government devotes great attention to the development of road transportation, which plays an important role in socio-economic life.

Afghanistan's most important transport route, which handles the main flow of foreign trade goods traffic, is the highway linking Kabul with the port of (Khayraton) on the banks of the Amu Darya river via the high Salang Pass. The volume of freight shipped along this artery, despite the continuing sabotage on the part of counterrevolutionary gangs, has grown by 200,000 metric tons in comparison with last year.

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DRA AGITPROP CAMPAIGN DESCRIBED

PM121439 [Editorial Report] Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 10 July 1985 second edition publishes on page 3 a 1,300-word "Dispatch from Afghanistan" by Lieutenant Colonel V. Skrizhalin entitled "In the Valleys of Helmand." It describes a recent 2-week agitprop campaign in Afghanistan's Helmand Province, which borders on Pakistan. The campaign was conducted by decision of the PDPA Central Committee and involved "two combat agitation detachments, representatives of the PDPA Central Committee, armed forces political organs, the national fatherland front, and women's youth, and religious organizations, doctors, a concert party, and journalists--170 people in all." Numerous meetings, talks, and movie shows were held to publicize the measures being taken by the party and the government to develop the DRA economy and enhance the people's well-being. Such campaigns always involve risks for those taking part in them, because the dushmans are violently opposed to them. But this time, the dispatch states, "not a single aimed shot was heard, unless you count a few mortar shells fired at a combat agitation detachment as it was returning from Gereshk to Lashkar Gah, accompanying 54 trucks with national economic freight to the provincial center. The rebels fired hastily, and the closest mortar shell exploded some 50 meters from the column." The dispatch concludes by noting that some "bandit formations" have already signed cooperation treaties with the "people's power."

No further processing planned.

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